



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2004

No. 123

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SHUSTER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 4, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL SHUSTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

H.R. 10 WILL IMPROVE HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, this week we will consider what is perhaps the most significant piece of legislation of this Congress. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, we all recognized that we had to take dramatic steps to ensure that it never happens again. H.R. 10, the 9/11 Recommendations Implementations Act, is the culmination of years of extensive study, debate and dedication by those who are committed to improving our Nation's homeland security.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important bill introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) not only because it takes extensive steps to reform our intelligence agencies, but also because it addresses a critical threat to our national security: The porous nature of our borders. We know it is far too easy for illegal immigrants to cross the border into this country, and we cannot ignore the fact that terrorists can gain access to the United States this way.

So I am particularly pleased that as we worked on this bill, we were able to include measures to strengthen our ongoing efforts to eliminate illegal border crossings. This legislation adds 10,000 new border patrol agents to intercept illegal immigrants and potential terrorists, as well as 4,000 new immigration enforcement investigators to track illegal immigrants down within our borders. These 14,000 new agents are badly needed and will immediately improve illegal immigrant interdiction and interception operations.

Additionally, H.R. 10 allows for expedited deportation of illegal immigrants and limits the ability of potential terrorists to claim political asylum to avoid being repatriated to their home country. All of these measures will upgrade our ability to win the battle that is taking place every day along our borders.

Perhaps most notably, H.R. 10 includes provisions to counter the explosive increase in identity fraud committed by illegal immigrants and terrorists. This issue is of paramount concern to me, because I firmly believe that if we can eliminate job access for illegal immigrants, then we will be much closer to completing our ultimate goal of eliminating illegal immigration.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, T.J. Bonner, a 26-year veteran of the Border Patrol, and president of the National Border Patrol Council, estimates that we can

eliminate as much as 98 percent of illegal border crossings if we can give employers access to verifiable identity information on prospective employees and if we crack down on employers who hire illegal workers. Ninety-eight percent is a remarkable number, and it would allow the Border Patrol to focus on targeting criminal aliens and terrorists.

Because of this, Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 5111, the Bonner Plan, to improve the security of our Social Security cards and provide a method by which employers could immediately verify the authenticity of that Social Security card. My bill would also increase fines for hiring an illegal worker by 400 percent, and provide for prison sentences of up to 5 years per count.

A major first step toward passage of the Bonner plan in its entirety has been the inclusion of very important provisions to combat identity fraud in H.R. 10 which we will be passing as I said this week. H.R. 10 includes new Federal minimum standards to ensure the integrity of both driver's licenses and birth certificates, both of which are widely used source documents which allow illegal immigrants to obtain other documents and access to social services. These new Federal standards will increase the difficulty for illegal immigrants to hide the true nature of their illegal status in our country.

And similar to the Bonner plan, H.R. 10 improves the privacy and integrity of an individual's Social Security number, limits the number of replacement Social Security cards a person may receive, and investigates whether the Social Security number itself can be used as a tool to verify a worker's authorization to work in the United States. All of these provisions are vitally important to the war against illegal immigration and the war on terrorism, so I stand here today to enthusiastically express my support for passage of H.R. 10 with the immigration measures fully intact.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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